
MERCHANTVILLE REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Committee Meeting #9
February 8, 2016 6PM
Merchantville Borough Hall

ATTENDEES:

Bill Lammey
Mike Mcloone
Janet Stevens
Rick Ragan
Monica Sohler

Ryan Middleton
Mara Wuebker
Mayor Brennan
Denise Brouse (for some)

HANDOUT:

Proposed Zoning and Design Standards

1. PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The committee discussed feedback it has received on the project's Facebook page and emails that were sent to committee members. The committee discussed that it desires public feedback on the concept designs and regulations that are being proposed, but is disappointed in the professional attack on Ragan Design Group and that it is unwarranted. A response was provided to the party individually.

2. PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES AND DESIGN STANDARDS

The group continued its work on proposed zoning changes that will be incorporated into the Redevelopment Plan. The following zoning topics were discussed:

1. Tattoo and piercing parlors, which are prohibited in B-1 zone should continue to be prohibited in Redevelopment Zone. While most committee members felt that these uses should be permitted if we want Merchantville to be responsive to the market and to be responsive to the desired artsy feel of the community, it was ultimately decided not to change this aspect of the ordinance for now.
2. Some clean-up items were discussed, including requiring the FY setback at r.r. r.o.w. for all uses, not just residential uses.
3. The group decided to keep the proposed inclusion of the prohibition against sexually-oriented businesses even though the Redevelopment Area would already be covered by criminal statute 2C:33-12.2 which prohibits these types of businesses within 1000 feet of churches, schools, and residential districts. Group discussed removing the prohibition against 'film or video of all kind,' as felt overly broad. Mara talked to Solicitor and felt that it could be seen as an infringement on freedom of speech.

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The following design standards were discussed:

- 1.. Changing the min requirement for first floor glass area to a min of 60% clear window area on 1st floor of buildings,
2. Changing the break in the max distance of long facades to be 55' instead of 100.'
3. Including a diagram, rather than photo of existing business with false mansard roof;
4. Changing some of the terminology in the pedestrian-oriented civic area. The committee wants to keep the pedestrian-oriented civic area to be a requirement for redeveloper ("shall"), but change language to "should" for size of it. If a redeveloper is appointed who wants to do more traditional development with parking in the interior, it will need to seek a design waiver from JLUB.
5. Changes to reduce max size of civic area that will be landscaped. We want it to be predominantly a hard surface for useable space.
6. Removed proposed language that required a dining barrier if serving alcohol.
7. Denise will give Mara lighting spec for downtown so that lighting will be consistent with acorn lighting throughout rest of downtown.
8. We will not work on sign requirements - it is already being worked on for all of the business areas and it will be too confusing to have different sign ordinances within the downtown.
9. There was a discussion that Borough will need to enhance its site plan and subdivision regulations because it is very minimal now. This should be on the 'to do' list in the future with Borough Engineer's assistance.

The group discussed who would have jurisdiction for granting variances and waivers from the Redevelopment Plan. Typically, the Redevelopment Authority has the jurisdiction so that when a Redeveloper goes to the Planning Board it's a clean application. However, the group is also including many design requirements that are more suited for the JLUB. Also, if only Council had the jurisdiction, it would be a cumbersome process since deviations would have to go through multiple steps to change the Redevelopment Plan Ordinance (Council, Planning Board for consistency with Master Plan, and then back to Council). Since the JLUB is the body that typically deals with site plan issues and variances, it was decided that it would be best to have JLUB continue this function, with the exception of a maximum building height variance would need to go to Council.

3. UPDATES (If any)

Environmental Contamination – there is low interest loan thru Environmental Infrastructure Trust that is available for brownfield remediation planning and remediation activities and infrastructure improvement, but only if will stay in public ownership. There are several entities potentially interested in PNC Bank.

4. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for February 22nd